

The stars  $F$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\lambda$ , however, are among those whose magnitudes were specially determined by Gould for comparison with  $\eta$  (cf. *Uranometria Argentina*, p. 256), and they are there given as 7.60, 7.48, and 7.44 respectively. As they have maintained their relative magnitudes, we may assume the actual magnitudes to be still the same; and my observations, therefore, make the magnitude of  $\eta$  *Argûs* at the present time very approximately

$$7.6$$

in Gould's scale of magnitudes.

*Royal Observatory, Cape of Good Hope :  
1886, March 16.*

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*The Nebulæ in the Pleiades.* By A. A. Common.

The photograph of a part of the *Pleiades*, by MM. Henry, referred to in their letter to Mr. Knobel in the last number of the *Notices* of the Society, is very interesting. That MM. Henry set out with the intention of photographing the nebula near *Merope*, that is so well known, may be taken for granted; that they should evidently fail to get this, and get evidence of three separate nebulae all near bright stars, only one of which can be said to have been certainly seen before, this being the same one near *Merope* that I found with the 3-foot Reflector in 1880 (*Monthly Notices*, April 1880), is very remarkable, and is due to the greater power of the photographic method over the eye in recording the presence of a faint light in the neighbourhood of a bright one.

On referring to my note of the observation of the small nebula near *Merope*, I have said: "There is strong suspicion in my mind of more nebula here," and I mention, "a similar appearance elsewhere" to that of this nebula. This I believe alluded to an observation of the Maia nebula which will be doubtless easily seen in the 3-foot telescope, and was the cause of the observation in the last paragraph of my note, where I say there is a great deal yet to be settled as to the extent and number of the nebulae in this cluster.

Whether the fainter well-known nebula can be photographed with a telescope so small as that used by MM. Henry remains to be seen. There is an extremely small amount of light available, the light of this nebula being, I believe, not so bright as the zodiacal light at a considerable elevation, whilst the faintest trace of skylight quite obliterates it. Observations made at this time of year would, I feel sure, render it very doubtful if this nebula could be seen with any aperture, and it may be that this would account for it not being seen by some observers who have only looked for it at this time of the year.

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*Introduction to a Catalogue of the Colours of 1,730 Stars.*

By W. S. Franks.

The observations detailed in the Catalogue of Star Colours, herewith presented to the Society,\* were commenced on Oct. 31, 1884, and continued until March 10, 1886. Two telescopes were employed, both of them Newtonian reflectors, and equatorially mounted—the specula, by Calver, of  $11\frac{1}{4}$ -inch and  $5\frac{1}{4}$ -inch aperture, with foci of 80 inches and 40 inches respectively. The smaller instrument was reserved for stars between  $+54^\circ$  and the Pole, which the larger telescope, from its peculiar style of mounting, could not reach. The eyepieces used were of the “Kellner” construction, giving powers of 90 and 200 on the  $11\frac{1}{4}$ -inch, 45 and 100 on the  $5\frac{1}{4}$ -inch; the lower power had a field of  $40'$  on the former, and  $1^\circ$  on the latter instrument. The higher power was only used for *double* stars. The magnitudes provisionally employed were derived from Heis, and, on the whole, they were found to be fairly accurate. A few obvious discrepancies were, however, met with, and duly recorded in the column headed “Remarks”; though particular attention to magnitude determinations was scarcely thought of, after the elaborate photometric researches so recently undertaken by Professors Pickering and Pritchard. All stars down to the 6–5 magnitude of the *Atlas Cœlestis Novus* (between  $-20^\circ$  and  $+90^\circ$ ) were examined, besides a few others of 6 magnitude, which were added during the prosecution of the work, being, in most cases, such as were in the immediate vicinity of the objects under examination. The constellation boundaries adopted were also from Heis, and in such instances where they differed from those of the B.A.C., a note to that effect was inserted under “Remarks.” Every star common to the present catalogue and the previous one (1877–8) has been compared, and where any serious difference was detected the same was duly entered in its proper place. Some of the violent discordances alluded to may probably be due to defective identification, the 1877–8 series having been taken directly from the atlases of Proctor and the S.D.U.K., and the finder as often used in the search as the circles. But, in the present list, every star has been separately identified by circle readings; and it is therefore likely to be the more trustworthy of the two series. On the whole, however—and considering that the two sets were made with telescopes of different construction, with a wide difference in aperture—the old and new observations are fairly accordant, and within the usual limit of error.

In connection with the subject of star colours it may be worth remark that many stars were found to be distinctly *yellowier* in twilight than on a dark sky; also that slight fog or haze had the effect of intensifying the yellow tints, especially, of course, towards the horizon. And, further, when collating the

\* The Catalogue is placed in the Library.